The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

JANUARY, 1950

The Streetwalker Who Crashed a Party

By ALBERT JOSEPH McCARTNEY

The United Nations—And in Our Time!

By ANDREW JUVINALL

When All Men Speak Well of You

By FREDERICK B. EUTSLER

Saints in Nero's Household

By JOHN OWEN GROSS

Chance or Providence

By JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK

What Makes a Good Sermon?

SERIES I

The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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Features For February

THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY is a serious indictment of Christian lethargy. "Who lynched Willie Earle?" asks Hawley Lynn, pastor of the Methodist Church in Pickens, South Carolina. His answer comprises the sermon.

WASHINGTON'S ENHANCING ALLIANCES is another good sermon for February. In this sermon Orva Lee Ice, pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, reveals important reasons for George Washington's greatness and the key to our possible achievement of greatness today.

EXTENSION LADDERS attacks the problem of racial segregation in America. Where do we get our prejudices and what does segregation do to human personalities? These are the key questions discussed by Maurice A. Johnson, pastor of the Community Methodist Church in El Segundo, California.

THE RIDDLE OF LIFE represents a scholarly exposition of Ecclesiastes—a book "written by a man who had waded through the bitter waters." The author is George C. Fetter, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Lawrence, Kansas.

GOD AND THE TAX ASSESSOR was the sermon which made the newspaper headlines last fall. The preacher, Eugene M. Austin, pastor of the Baptist Temple in Charleston, West Virginia, offered to increase his own tax assessment six times.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SERMON?—Series II, will feature articles written by four outstanding professors of homiletics in the United States.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

ALBERT JOSEPH MCCARTNEY is director of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, an organization of 40 years' standing sponsored by outstanding business men in the city of Chicago. Before coming to Chicago, Mr. McCartney was pastor of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C.

ANDREW JUVINALL, after graduating from Northwestern University in 1928, motorcycled around the world, visiting 41 countries and the League of Nations. Last year Mr. Juvinall visited the UN as a member of the World Peace and Brotherhood Mission from the west coast.

JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK is pastor of the Spurgeon Memorial Church, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, Channell Islands. He is a frequent contributor to religious journals in the U. S.

JOHN OWEN GROSS, formerly president of Union College, Barbourville, Kentucky, and Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa, is executive secretary for the Division of Educational Institutions under the Board of Education of The Methodist Church. He is the author of numerous books including *Education for Life.*

FREDERICK B. EUTSLER is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and is now pastor of the United Church of Raleigh, North Carolina. He was a chaplain in the U. S. Army from 1944 to 1946 and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON is pastor of the Church of St. Luke and Epiphany in Philadelphia, Pa.

MARSHALL WINGFIELD is pastor of the First Congregational Church in Memphis, Tenn.

GERALD KENNEDY is a bishop of The Methodist Church assigned to the Portland area.

HAMPTON ADAMS is pastor of the Union Avenue Christian Church in St. Louis, Mo.

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY is pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pa.

T. MOORE ATKINSON recently was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Arcata, Calif.

ROY C. HELFENSTEIN is pastor of the First Congregational Church in Mason City, Ia.

VOLUME XXI
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THE PULPIT

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JANUARY, 1950

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

AMID all the fanfare with which the secular press plays up in story and picture every event of concern to Roman Catholicism and every utterance of its hierarchy and pope, one can take more than a crumb of comfort from two articles by Protestant leaders which have been given wide publicity this very month. Both articles deal with the prospect of Protestant unity. One, written by Dr. Truman Dougles appeared in the *Woman's Home Companion*. It was given still wider publicity by full page advertisements in the leading metropolitan daily papers. The article was entitled "Let's Unite Our Churches Now!" Millions of Protestants and non-Protestants were thus shocked by the revelation of the scandal of our sectarian divisions and informed of the growing strength of the movement for a united Protestantism. The other article was by Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen. It appeared in a syndicated section of many metropolitan newspapers. It presented to a constituency of eight million readers the story of the cumulative approaches which are now converging toward the formation of a united church. Dr. Van Dusen's title was, "The Protestants *Are* Uniting!" Both writers brought into high relief the mid-December conference at Greenwich, Conn., where, at this writing, delegates from eight denominations representing nearly 20 million Protestants, are expected to face earnestly the possibility of becoming one church. There can be no doubt that the feeling for some form of Protestant solidarity is stronger today than ever before. I can imagine that the writers of these two articles have received a flood of letters approving their very readable contributions. I shall be at Greenwich and will surely have something to report in the next issue of the Pulpit.

Protestantism Gets Some Headlines!

The Book of the Month

THE MESSAGE AND THE SILENCE OF THE AMERICAN PULPIT, *by Sabapathy Kulandran. Pilgrim Press, $2.50.*

THIS is the first book I have read in which a Christian scholar in a non-Christian land presents a forthright critique of our American Christianity. The author was a Congregationalist who, with his denomination, joined in forming the church of South India. He thereby accepted ordination in the Anglican succession and was made a bishop in this new united church. He recently traveled extensively over the United States listening to innumerable sermons, talking with innumerable ministers, teachers and seminary students, as well as preaching in our pulpits. He was impressed by a certain "silence" in American preaching—a silence on the gospel itself. He raises the question whether the American pulpit really believes the gospel! And he brings forward cogent considerations and observations to support his doubt on this point. Coming from an oriental Christian, his critique demands our thoughtful concern. The book deals with the whole field of Christian missions. He believes that Christianity has the last word for mankind, and he justifies with lucid argument its missionary motivation. I cannot begin to say how greatly I have been helped by this book. Its rich erudition, its understanding, its luminous style and its utter candor will have a wholesome effect upon every reader.

A Thought for the Month

BY its almost unlimited publicity in the daily press, the impression has been created that the Roman Catholic church is fighting a single-handed battle against secularism. Protestantism, having no comparable sounding board from which its voice can be carried to the ear of the general public, is believed to be indifferent on this subject. But Protestant scholars and other leaders for a long time have been exposing and deploring the secularist character of our culture and civilization. No doubt, the Catholic propaganda has been stimulated and dramatized by the need of justifying the parochial school education in contrast to that of our secularized public school. But even here, Protestants have been for a long time preaching and writing on the necessity of finding a constitutional way to include the study of religion in the public schools. They believe that the taboo on such study is producing a type of mind which is not only prejudicial to religion but a stultification of the noble profession of teaching. But Protestants have not yet found an effective way of presenting their challenge of the secularism of our public school system. This challenge appears in innumerable books, editorials in church papers, sermons and resolutions of church bodies. These reach only a few people. Since the "released time" adventure has been declared unconstitutional, Protestants should now unitedly go to the educational authorities—school boards, state superintendents and state legislatures (if necessary)—and demand (a) that the study of religion in public schools be placed upon the same basis as the study of any other subject in the curriculum, or (b) that the school week be shortened by a half day which the churches could use for religious instruction, or both (a) and (b).

Protestantism and Secularism

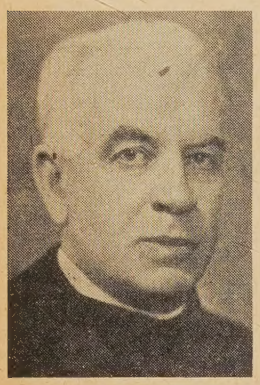
Charles Clayton Morrison

The Streetwalker Who Crashed a Party*

By ALBERT JOSEPH McCARTNEY

(Luke 7:36-50)

THE STORY that we tell tonight is a very old one repeated for you over and over again in all your literature, your drama, and your song. It has to do with "One more unfortunate . . . rashly importunate," a persistent strand in the history of human society and the oldest profession in the world.



The scene is laid in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, at a time when the name of the Galilean was on every tongue. Simon was one of the chief men of the town. Everyone felt honored to sit at his table. All throughout the day there had been much coming and going upon the part of the servants. The table was arranged in the usual oriental fashion of two thousands years ago, the board being raised a foot or so above the level of the floor and in an "L" shape so that the host could sit at one end facing his guests. Individual, cushioned divans fanned away from the tables, and upon them the guests would comfortably recline supporting themselves on their left elbows.

To understand what follows one must remember the free and open manner of living amongst those orientals which made it quite possible for uninvited guests to crash the party and gaze upon the notables and listen to their conversation or speeches (very much as some of us do when we can't afford the $10 a plate at the Congress or the Stevens, by gathering about the door to see who is at the speakers' table and to hear what the guest speaker has to say). So the town people began to gather early about the house of Simon just as they do in Hollywood on an opening night to watch the distinguished guests arriving. Each guest is preceded by one of Simon's servants, bearing a torch.

I

As each guest arrived at the atrium a servant motioned him to a stool where the guest seated himself while a lackey removed his sandals and washed his feet. Then he proceeded barefoot into the banquet hall where another servant touched his head with a sweet-smelling ointment as he passed on to be greeted by the host with the customary kiss and so to mingle with the other guests. One wonders just what motivated Simon to invite Jesus who had the reputation of mingling with Publicans and sinners, and why, in his case, the customary courtesies of washing the feet and anointing with oil were omitted. When the guests were seated the curious outsiders began to crowd closer in.

Peering furtively from the shadow of a pillar I notice the figure of a woman whose beautiful countenance is momentarily revealed as an evening breeze lifts her veil. She appears to be scanning the guests as though eager to locate some particular individual. Now she has discovered the one for whom she was looking. As unobtrusively as possible she moves against the wall behind the guests at the table, her heart thumping within her as she is conscious of the insinuating glances with which some of the men follow her graceful swaying body. She is holding something close under her left arm as though to warm it with her loving heart. Presently she stands immediately behind the couch upon which Jesus is reclining. She takes the exquisite blue vial and breaks it over the head of Jesus, and, unable now to control her emotions, a tempest of tears drip upon his feet. She had planned what to say to him by way of gratitude for her new life, but her lips tremble so she cannot pronounce the words; and kneeling there she bathes his feet with her soft white hands and wipes them with her long black tresses.

II

One wonders where this woman had heard of Jesus and what the circumstances of her conversion were. It is plain that when she entered the house of Simon with her costly alabaster she was no longer a woman of the street to be pointed to sneeringly as a woman of questionable repute. Somewhere, somehow, she had come in touch with the Savior and her life was changed; and out of gratitude for her forgiveness she had come to offer this dramatic oblation.

As the pungent sweetness of the nard began to permeate the atmosphere of the banquet hall, the attention of the guests was aroused and their curiosity quickly located the little drama at the feet of Jesus. There was much whispering and lifting of eyebrows at the apparent intimacy between Jesus and this beautiful woman.

Though seated at the far end of the table, Jesus was not slow to catch the expression on Simon's face, for Jesus had an uncanny gift of penetrating into the boudoir of a man's soul, and he could read Simon's thoughts like a book! "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." Speaking up, so that Simon could distinctly hear him at the other end of the table and so that His words might be heard by others, Jesus said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he saith, "Master, say on." Then Jesus told the story of two debtors, like Hamlet's play within the play.

There was a certain moneylender who had two debtors, one of whom owed him five hundred shillings

Delivered before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Orchestra Hall, November 13, 1949.

and the other owed him fifty shillings. And when he found out that neither had anything with which to pay, he forgave them both. And then Jesus raised the question, which of the two will be more grateful to him? Of course, Simon had to answer, "The one to whom he forgave most." Then turning to the woman just as though Simon had never noticed her he said, "Seest thou this woman? I came in here as your guest. You refused me the customary courtesies of a guest. No water with which to wash my feet, no customary salutary kiss, no oil with which to anoint my head. But here is this woman! God knows she needed forgiveness, but it is just because of this forgiveness that she is pouring out this demonstration of affection from a grateful heart. Your life, Simon, is upright and respectable in contrast to the life of this woman. You think that you have little need for forgiveness and therefore you have little gratitude, and little love.

How this story bites deep and is a symbolic incarnation of respectable religion in every age. This is the very gospel that we need to hear, that a man's love for God invariably will be commensurate with his sense of divine forgiveness.

The fundamental teaching that Jesus sought to convey in telling this story of the two debtors was this, that the greater a man's sin and the more conscious he is of that sin the greater will be his gratitude in the hour when he becomes conscious of pardon for that sin.

III

"Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." It is the glory of the Gospel that in every emergency Jesus has some helpful counsel to give or some heart-searching caution to offer. Men still turn, in questioning respect, to hear what the Man of Galilee may have to say regarding any perplexing problems touching the life of the world. Here is the old, old picture of a sinful soul trying to creep back into decent society. That is still an embarrassing situation. What has smug respectable society to say under these circumstances?—Cast her aside! She has forfeited the right to mingle with respectable people; dismiss her from the private school lest she contaminate the others. What has the law to say?—Haul her into court, hang a heavy fine upon her and turn her loose to ply her trade upon the streets. What has the Council of Social Agencies to say?—Send her to the Traveller's Aid Society and give her a ticket back home, the one place in all the world to which she does not want to go. What has education to say?—Send her to the reform school where she will be "cabined, cribbed, confined" in a little world made up of her own kind.

To this eternally embarrassing problem neither science nor legislation nor social work nor education have been able to give a satisfactory answer, so we turn again to hear what this Man has to say. In a simple story that even a child could understand, he tells us of the redeeming love of God which is "broader than the measure of man's mind" and how the greater our need is for forgiveness the greater will be our gratitude and our love to him for sins forgiven.

Who can read this parable without being reminded afresh that Jesus has something very personal to say to each of us? I imagine that he emphasized the words "to thee" and Simon felt the personal thrust. Perhaps he had been hoping that Jesus would say something to entertain his guests. Maybe he would interpret some difficult chapter in the Old Testament; perhaps he would make a speech that would stir their hearts with patriotism and strengthen their opposition to the Roman Empire. Perhaps he would talk about the taxes or the city improvements or the political changes about to take place. If such was his hope, Simon was quickly disillusioned. It was a personal problem about his own attitude toward God that Jesus presented to him.

IV

To be sure, Jesus has much to say to mankind en masse, to society as a whole, to the community in general, to our Christian civilization. "He speaks to our age" so turbulent with the cross-currents of fear and hate and selfishness. His teachings have much to say for Capital and Labor, to Communism and political societies, and it is well for us to hear what Jesus has to say upon these impersonal subjects. But my problem is not an international one, it is not an industrial one, it is not even an educational one, it is a very personal one. Something that goes on deep down in my soul twenty-four hours of the day, and three hundred sixty-five days of the year. I want to hear what he has to say to me.

Over and over again the stories of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospel, have to do with personal conversations between him and individuals. As he walked along the highways and through the villages of Galilee so he roams amongst us still. And, my friend, he has "somewhat to say unto thee." I cannot guess what it is about or what might be your personal anxiety, your burden, or your fear, but you know what it is and he has something to say to you—something for you, and for no one else.

There are many problems in this world of mixed human relationships which give us great concern, but the problem of all problems is myself and yourself! He holds the answer to your personal perplexity. He has the story to tell which fits your case. He knows the secret of your fear and your dispeace. He has the one word that will lift the worry from your heart.

"Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee" . . . "Jesus say on."

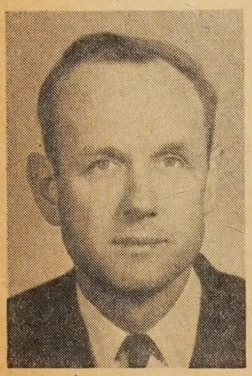
"The values created by love never fail; but whether there are class privileges, they shall fail; whether there are millions gathered, they shall be scattered; and whether there are vested rights, they shall be abolished . . . For now we see in the fog of selfishness, darkly, but then we shall see the destinies of the race as God sees them. But now abideth honor, justice, and love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."—*Walter Rauschenbusch.*

The United Nations—and in Our Time!

By ANDREW JUVINALL

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah 65:17.

GOD yet liveth! He is at work in your heart prompting you to be a person of integrity, magnanimity, and high purpose. He is at work in our world. All is not right with this world, but there is a great Spirit within it making for righteousness and there are millions of people who believe in this Spirit and are seeking to be workers together with him. This faith in a God who is leading man out of the darkness into the light is the mightiest force in the world today. This faith is more powerful than the atom for it is what holds the world together.



Today multitudes are praying for peace and world order with an unprecedented confidence, and their prayer gradually is being answered. Many people fail to see this because incidents which make for despair and fear are so generally emphasized as to overshadow the great shining reality which is emerging from the gloom. This reality is that men as a whole are learning to work together for their mutual benefit and are lifting burdens from many people in many parts of the world. The primary agency through which they are doing these things is the United Nations. God is at work in the United Nations, using it to create a world in which there is peace, health, justice, and freedom.

WHAT THE UN HAS DONE

We want a peaceful world and we realize that just as the spark at Sarajevo in 1914 ignited a world war, so any continued contention today might eventuate in a cosmic cataclysm. During the past twelve months the United Nations has intervened as a powerful influence for peace in conflicts affecting nearly one-fourth of the world's population.

The war in Kashmir between India and Pakistan has been ended. Under the skilful leadership of Count Bernadotte and Ralph Bunche the conflict in Palestine has concluded; the boundaries between Israel and Jordan have been set; Jerusalem is being made into an international territory; and Israel has been received as the fifty-ninth member of the United Nations.

In Indonesia, at the behest of the United Nations, the Dutch and Indonesian soldiers have laid down their arms. The Indonesians have been permitted to return to their capital out of which they had been driven by Dutch soldiers. A UN Commission is mediating the remaining differences.

All of this has been accomplished solely by UN's moral force, the power of persuasion unaided by military pressure or even a police force.

During the same past year the Berlin deadlock has been broken and the foreign ministers of the big powers have conferred for the first time in seventeen months. This came about largely because of the many small nations in UN urging the big powers to resolve their differences.

At San Francisco when the United Nations was first formed, both the United States and Russia were unwilling to subordinate their countries completely to international authority. Both insisted in writing the veto into the charter. In my judgment Russia has abused the right of the veto. Yet the Security Council has operated with considerable success under its rule of unanimity in the most critical period of great power tension. As Secretary General Trygve Lie has pointed out, "We can't have an international police force, atomic control, or reduction of armaments without unanimity on the part of the great powers." This unanimity is essential even if the veto were eliminated. International problems cannot be solved except by big power agreement. We simply cannot have lasting security from war by any arrangement that leaves out any of the great powers. It is no contribution to a peaceful world to kick Russia out of the United Nations or to start a parallel organization.

PROGRESS DESPITE DIFFERENCES

The founders of the United Nations at San Francisco agreed that peace could be maintained by a universal organization founded on universal acceptance of a Charter. The never thought that UN could abolish all differences of opinion and ideology or that the great powers would immediately act in unity and brotherhood. The very fact that there are so many differences between the United States and Russia makes the continuance of an inclusive organization such as the UN all the more necessary, for as long as those differences can be kept on a conference level there will be no armed conflict. All the problems have not been solved but the conflict has been kept within peaceful bounds and the door kept open for further progress. For these things we thank God!

Again, we thank God for the continuing contribution to world health which the UN is making. Disease germs know no boundaries. Hence, what advances the health in far-away continents protects our health too. As followers of Jesus who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me," we cannot ignore the plight of the millions in Asia and Africa who suffer from malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and typhus.

We therefore rejoice to read how UN's World Health Organization promptly ships typhus vaccine by plane from Washington to Afghanistan to combat an epidemic there; how in China WHO is training

young men and young women to know the characteristics of infectious diseases, to provide safe water supply, to get rid of the breeding places of flies and mosquitos, to vaccinate against typhoid and smallpox, to assist at child birth, and to give first aid; how in Europe the UN is vaccinating twelve million children against tuberculosis; and how a great malaria control program is under way in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Thailand.

TOWARD BETTER FOOD SUPPLY

In addition to contributing to a more peaceful and a more healthful world, the UN is making for a more just world, one in which through cooperative effort men will help answer the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Food production has nearly reached pre-war level, but the world's population has increased 200,000,000 since 1940. Therefore, the Economic and Social Council has set up a broad program of technical assistance to help any country that wants to be helped in developing its agriculture and industry in such a way as to lift the living standard for the entire population.

The UN recently sponsored a significant conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources. Since millions of people in tropical countries are protein-starved, the UN is taking steps to spread the pond fish culture knowledge of India and China and to increase the use of a species of fish know as tilapia. Research is being encouraged in the synthetic methods of food production. The Food and Agricultural Organization is constantly teaching the nations of the world better methods of producing, transporting, and storing food and is helping reduce the terrific loss from rodents, which loss has amounted to enough food to feed 100,000,000 people annually.

TOWARD UNIVERSAL EMPLOYMENT

Last year when we visited the Economic and Social Council meeting at Lake Success the problem which representatives of United States, Russia, and other countries were discussing was how to keep employment at a high level around the world. Now the Secretary-General has been asked to publish currently brief up-to-date reports on measures taken in various countries to maintain high levels of employment, and all governments have been asked to avoid any steps which might restrict international trade. The kingdom of God is not at hand, but at least the nations are beginning to ask, "How will this affect the other countries?" And that is progress for either the nation or the individual who reaches this point!

God wishes us to have not only a just, healthful, and peaceful world, but also a free world. This Jesus recognized when in his first sermon at Nazareth he proclaimed as his purpose "to preach deliverance to captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised." Therefore, we take satisfaction in the UN's Trusteeship Council which is giving international supervision to nine underdeveloped territories in Asia and Africa with a view to protecting the interests of the people therein and hastening the time when they can be independent nations. This is a far cry from the exploitation of colonial days.

TOWARD UNIVERSAL FREEDOM

Again, we rejoice in the Declaration of Human Rights which the General Assembly adopted a year ago. This magnificent statement begins, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." It then goes on to declare the individual's right to political freedom, freedom of movement, freedom of asylum from persecution; freedom to own property, to join a labor union; and his right to adequate education and a standard of living sufficient for the health and well-being of himself and family. And now the UN is considering how most effectively to interpret and implement the Declaration.

Obviously the United Nations has made a difference to millions of people to whom it has brought new hope and enriched life. It has helped create a world in which there is a large measure of peace, health, justice, and freedom; a world closer to the Kingdom of God.

WE NEED PATIENCE

Today we need something of the patience of the scientist. Luther Burbank took ten years to develop a pitless plum and twelve years to develop a cactus without bristles. If it takes us even a little longer to develop a world that doesn't throw stones or bristle with armaments should we mind?

Long ago the prophets, Isaiah and Micah, dreamed of a time when all nations would worship at the feet of one God, obey one universal law, and beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. That time has not yet come, but we are moving in that direction. Trygve Lie recently said that if we can avoid war for the next ten years, by that time we shall have built the instrumentalities and the spirit that will insure permanent peace. May God give us the grace so to build in our time!

The Making of the Soul of Man

I am grown haggard and forlorn, from dreams
That haunt me, of the time that is to be,
When man shall cease from wantonness and strife,
And lay his law upon the course of things.
Then shall he live no more on sufferance,
An accident, the prey of powers blind;
The untamed giants of nature shall bow down—
The tides, the tempest and the lightning cease
From mockery and destruction, and be turned
Unto the making of the soul of man.

—Upton Sinclair

When All Men Speak Well of You

By FREDERICK B. EUTSLER

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."—Luke 6:26.

IN THE introduction to his "intimate history" of *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* Robert E. Sherwood makes this observation concerning the unremitting animosity of the press toward the late president: ". . . It seems to me that the hostility of so large a part of the press to his administration was essential to Roosevelt—as an inspiration even more than as a deterrent—and that he would not have been the president he was without it. He would never have thrived in an atmosphere of cloying unanimity."

A president, of course—any president—is a ready made target for abuse and vilification. Most of us never experience it in any such degree as does the occupant of the White House, but to the extent that we have known it we are not convinced that there is any inspiration in it for us. Which is a backhanded way of saying that, on the contrary, we do not want anyone to have a negative opinion of us. What we say and do is never entirely apart from the question in our minds: "What will people say?" Even Roosevelt, so Sherwood tells us, used to go over his speeches again and again studying every implication "for its effect on various groups in the nation and on allies and enemies and neutrals." Mr. Sherwood should know because he helped to write the president's speeches for a period of five years. If that is necessary for a president who speaks only occasionally, think how much more necessary it is for a minister who speaks every Sunday.

What people will say is a powerful deterrent, if not an inspiration. Perhaps that is why we have a sneaking admiration for the person who flouts public opinion and appears to be oblivious to it, for we imagine fondly that some day, under some circumstance, we, too, might kick public opinion in the teeth and say or do what we really believe.

CHRISTIANS STAND FOR SOMETHING

Since the bent of our nature is toward acceptance and approval, and the avoidance of disapproval, one of the statements of Jesus in the Lucan version of the Sermon on the Mount may still have the capacity to amaze us because it seems to ignore this natural inclination: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

Jesus is saying here that a Christian ought to stand for something, and that to stand for something is almost sure to bring unpopularity, at least in certain quarters; that the moment one finds he is receiving applause and praise instead of abuse and slander, he had better ask himself this searching question: "Have my opponents been converted, or have I changed?" This admonition of Jesus would be just as valid if it read: "Woe unto you when *some* men speak well of you." That is no doubt what he had in mind when he added: "For so did their fathers to the false prophets." The false prophets were those who soothed the people with lies; who told the rulers and powerful classes, not what God wanted them to hear, but what they wanted to hear. The true prophets were those who delivered God's message without fear of offending highly placed persons and in utter indifference to their hostility. Jesus was reminding his disciples of their spiritual heritage; of the prophets like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah in whose succession they stood. The opposition and malice they would encounter should not cause them to grow discouraged or to complain, but rather to rejoice: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

CHRISTIANS ARE LIBERALS

Most of us like to think of ourselves as liberals—liberals in religion, politics, and economics. That word *liberal* is a good word that has been much abused. Let me give you a kind of pragmatic, rough, working definition of a liberal. A liberal is one who does not believe that history has yet come to an end. He believes that the world, and the people in it, need changing, not in terms of some static Utopia, but in terms of the overarching values of the Christian faith which both transcend history and judge it, and are the ends toward which history moves under divine control. In short, a liberal is one who says that it is not enough to believe; one must also act.

Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher and theologian wrote a parable in which he likened the Christians of his day to a flock of geese living in a barnyard:

> "Every seventh day they paraded to a corner of the yard, and their most eloquent orator got up on the fence and spoke of the wonders of geese. He told of the exploits of the forefathers who dared to mount up on wings and fly all over the sky. He spoke of the mercy of the creator, who had given geese wings and the instinct to fly. This deeply impressed the geese, who nodded their heads solemnly. They applauded the eloquence of the preaching goose. All this they did. One thing they did not do. They did not fly, for the corn was good and the barnyard secure." (Paraphrased in the column of *Simeon Stylites, The Christian Century,* May 11, 1949.)

Admittedly, this is not an easy time for liberals. All men do not speak well of them, and some men speak

slanderously of them. This is the day of the false prophets (as indeed is every day) who are praised for saying what the people would like to hear.

It is not an easy time for liberals in the church. There are known instances of churches which have encouraged inter-racial fellowship being put under pressure to abandon this policy, because in the judgment of some church members the criticism evoked by these activities is harmful. One can understand their position. One can even sympathize with it. As I have already noted, most of us find criticism irksome. Can it be that the underlying reason why this criticism irritates us is because the church has become so respectable that we consider any criticism of it a reflection on our own respectability? Throughout my ministry I have talked to many people who are outside the church—some of them reluctantly—and the reason they have left the church is because, they say, the churches are so namby-pamby that they will not stand for anything positive enough to make them open to criticism.

Need I remind you that the very word Christian was first used as a term of derision, and that the names of some of our Protestant denominations were originally terms of ridicule. The church is not an organization of socially congenial people. It is, rather, an organization committed to the practice of Christian principles.

In 1946, the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, meeting at Grinnell, Iowa, adopted the following resolution:

> "We repent of the sin of racial segregation as practiced both within and outside our churches, and respond to the mandate of the Christian gospel to promote with uncompromising word and purpose, the integration in our Christian Churches and our democratic society of all persons of whatever race, color, or ancestry on the basis of equality and mutual respect in an inclusive fellowship."

The Book of Discipline of the Five Years Meeting of Friends, published in 1945, states that:

> "It is the concern of Friends that the Indian, the Negro, the Oriental and every victim of prejudice or oppression may share with the most favored the heritage of justice, freedom and brotherly love which is their equal right. For God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.' Friends believe that any racial discrimination is essentially a violation of His law of love, whether by legal enactment or by inequitable practices which interfere with democratic liberties or cultural or economic development."

If this is "the mandate of the Christian gospel" then our concern ought to be able to try to follow it. If there are those on the outside who find this an occasion for reproach, we regret it, but our only reply can be: "We are doing this in obedience to the dictates of Christian teaching and Christian conscience. If we are wrong, it is only because we have wrongly understood the truths of Christian faith."

It is not an easy time for liberals in politics. To stand for needed reform is to expose oneself to the reckless and irresponsible smear of "communism." A liberal rejects both the extremes of communism and "standpatism." When Dr. Frank P. Graham was appointed to the Senate by Governor Scott the old charges that he is a communist were revived in the press and on the radio. And yet an article in the State Communist newspaper assailed him for his opposition to communism. There could be no better proof of his liberalism than that. Consider the disgraceful and vicious libel of some of the most eminent citizens of this nation. Nobody doubts that there were communists at the "Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace," but to call men like Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, and Bishop Parsons "dupes and fellow travelers," as one popular magazine did, is to hit a new low in journalistic scurrility. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you."

LIBERALISM NOT EASY

It is not an easy time for liberals who believe in peace. Not long ago the United States Senate was holding hearings on the Atlantic Pact. There can be no doubt that those who supported the pact believe sincerely that it will keep the peace. But history shows that every attempt to preserve peace by a balance of power is foredoomed to failure, from the "Pax Romana," to the "Pax Brittanica," to this new venture which might well be called the "Pax Americana." And yet persons who opposed this pact risked the charge of favoring Russian Communism against our own nations.

It is not an easy time for liberals who believe that a liberal education ought to train students to analyze conflicting points of view and determine for themselves their truth or falsity. To mention a few examples: Several months ago some professors—liberal in the sense that I have just described—were dismissed at Olivet College, in Michigan, a Congregational Christian School. Likewise, the Board of Trustees of William Penn College, a Quaker School in Oskaloosa, Iowa, forced the resignation of the President, Cecil Hinshaw, because of his liberal administration.

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" Does it become clear why Christ pronounced this warning? To be a Christian means to stand for something inevitably means that all men will not speak well of us. "It is blessed, nevertheless, to suffer derision in a good cause." That is the title of an essay by Kierkegaard. He quotes the words of our text, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"

> "For this," he declares, "is what Christianity means (and if this is not its meaning, there is no meaning in Christianity), that a man should live his life in such a decisive way, should so definitely and openly maintain what he wills, what he believes and hopes, that it is impossible all might speak well of him. It may be difficult enough to attain this aim, this dreadful aim of having all speak well of one; but if one is to succeed, it can only be by a shrewd and cowardly effeminacy which Christianity abhors and condemns . . . This, as one sees in Christ's saying, is not only the most paltry inheritance of renown a man can leave behind him, that all men spoke well of him, but it is judgment: woe unto him that he succeeded!

Since to be a Christian definitely and decisively means that some men will not speak well of us we must remember that we cannot be truly Christian if we do not have the grace of forgiveness toward them. To hate is to poison the inner springs of the spirit, and to deny the redeeming power of the sacrificial love of the cross. "But I say unto you that hear, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Perhaps no President of the United States was ever more cruelly abused and slandered than Abraham Lincoln. What was Lincoln's greatness? In the words of Emerson: "His heart was as great as the world, but (we might say, because) there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong."

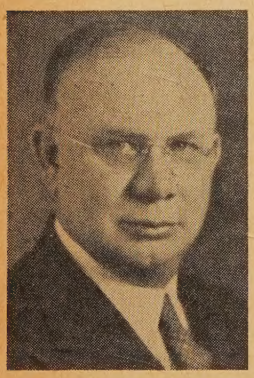
The saving grace of forgiveness and the saving grace of a sense of humor, whereby we do not take ourselves too seriously and are enabled to laugh at those who oppose or misjudge us, and to laugh at ourselves for being so upset by their opposition and misjudgment. To refer again to Lincoln: One day an old friend from Springfield visited him in the White House and asked him how it felt to be President of the United States. A smile rippled across the furrows of his face as he replied: "You have heard about the man tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail. A man in the crowd asked him how he liked it and he replied that if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, he'd rather walk." If it were not for the honor of being Christians we would prefer not to be criticized for it. But as with Lincoln, a sense of humor can help us to bear criticism.

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

Saints in Nero's Household

By JOHN OWEN GROSS

THE WORD "saint" seems to belong to another age. Its use generally is restricted to persons who have been canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. With the title limited to martyrs, miracle workers, and persons who have lived in some small eddy apart from life's main stream it naturally savors of other-worldliness and suggests an impossible goal for the average person.



Paul's use of the term "saint" is different. Those persons in Nero's household called saints formed the material out of which the early church was built. It was true that in the early church there were slaves, but in Rome's population of 1,500,000 the slaves outnumbered the freemen three to one. Yet all of the slaves of that day were not uncivilized barbarians taken from jungles to do menial labor but many were unfortunate persons of learning and culture carried away from captured nations. Often they became, like Demetrius in *The Robe,* trusted members of important households.

The Romans utilized the talents of the peoples they conquered. Nero's palace was renowned for its collection of artists, poets, musicians, actors, and artisans. Nero himself doubtless took lessons from some of his own slaves in engraving, painting, sculpture, and literature.

Paul, whose Christian statesmanship and far-sighted vision helped him to lay the foundation for the Christian movement in the Roman world, discovered even before he went to Rome the qualities of the Christians in that city. Their faith, he said, was recognized throughout the whole world. He knew something of the environment in which the Christians were compelled to live in Rome. From his epistle to the Romans it seems that he possessed a rather minute understanding of the various forms of immorality prevalently practiced, the low estimate held for human life, and the callous, merciless attitudes reflected in all forms of human relations.

But in an age of unbridled licentiousness and coarse vulgarity, the apologists of the Christians could always point with pride to the purity of their lives. Aristides said of them that they did not bear false witness or covet the property of others, that they honored their parents and loved their neighbors, that they strove to do good to their enemies and to win as friends those who injured them, that if they saw a stranger they took him under their roof and rejoiced over him and that he who had, gave without reproach to him who had not.

This small group of Christians in Nero's palace was part of a movement that was destined to Christianize the powerful Roman empire and outlaw many of its deep-seated vices and brutal arena sports, lessen the influence of vulgar and secular art, and open the way for some of the later immortal productions. In four centuries the nation which had persecuted Christianity on the grounds of its opposition to Roman gods, its enmity to public welfare, its intellectual absurdities, and for enabling slaves to live like philosophers, had accepted it as the professed faith of the majority. From the role of a despised minority cult the church in less than 500 years overcame the moral decay of Rome to emerge as the culture maker of the Mediterranean basin.

THE SOURCE OF POWER

How may we account for the success of this movement? Those who have studied it have concluded that the phenomenal power found in the early church was the result of a burst of spiritual energy, unequaled in the history of the race. It was ascribed by the first Christians to their fatih in Christ. Obviously, not only the twelve men first associated with Jesus but also the

early Christians discovered the source of spiritual power. To rediscover the principles connected with the release of creative spiritual dynamic is a challenge to all Christian workers who aspire to make the Christian way of life dominant in this world.

The engaging part about the persons in Nero's household was their unlimited confidence in their newly discovered faith. They lived, we repeat, in a period when the lot of the common man was without promise or hope. The whole atmosphere about him was morally depressing. But withal the apparent insurmountable obstacles these early Christians proceeded upon the assumption that conditions which could be cured need not be endured. In order to rediscover how they were so successful in reshaping the Roman empire, a careful study of some of the principles mentioned by Paul in his letter to them is apropos.

There have been some conjectures that Paul, because of the many hazards he faced, regarded the epistle to the Romans as his last message and, therefore, he formulated fully and precisely his conceptions of the essentials of Christianity and sent them to the capital city to be kept by the Christians there for Christians in all parts of the empire. Godet referred to the epistle as the Cathedral of the Christian Faith and "the first logical exposition of the work of God in Christ for the salvation of the world."

Therefore, it seems that what Paul had to say to this infinitesimal minority in Rome about Christianity may prove to be a dependable guide to all who have the courage to accept the call of God to work for the making of a better world. In it our generation can find the religious power for building of an ecumenical church able to bring all men into one glorious unity in Christ.

CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL

It is not possible here to isolate each one of the important principles given by Paul in Romans which have furnished the dynamic for spreading the Christian faith during the past centuries. Two may be lifted up here for consideration. They are: (1) Paul's confidence in the Gospel; (2) the transforming influence in society of persons possessing spiritually renewed minds.

Paul's declaration, "I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . ." must not be written off as a flash of Pauline oratory. It was a considered opinion born out of his own personal experience and from many observations he made of the influence of the Gospel upon society. Central in his gospel was Jesus. He had no misgivings about the place of Christ or disturbing vagueness about the person of Christ. (With Professor Harkness I am inclined to agree that the Christian worker who has not found that the Christian message centers in great affirmations and imperatives had better sell insurance.)

All through Paul's ministry he fought influences that sought to shear the gospel of its power and reduce it to an insipid Jewish cult. He did not hold that one was as good as another but insisted that a clear distinction be made between the Jewish conception and the Christian revelation through Christ. The former built its system upon law; the latter upon love, or the spirit of Jesus. While the latter accepts without question the ethics and morality of Sinai it does not rely upon legalism for their operation. Written, as the prophet said, upon the heart, genuine goodness becomes part of the very nature of the individual. This is genius of the Christian faith and the source of its dynamics. "To as many as received Him (Jesus) to them gave he power to become." (John 1:12)

FAILURE APART FROM CHRIST

There is always before Christian workers the temptation to rely upon systems and plans which work in indirect ways to transform individuals and place Christian practices and ideals into life. Some of these are subtle enough to deceive the most careful student. Alexander Mekiljohn, the American philosopher, reviews the ideals of Christianity and says that these may become operative in society without any connection with the body of faith but through the inspiration furnished by the state itself. But when the time comes that men and women in the democratic tradition ignore the historic concept of man as a child of God with free will and immortal soul, true freedom will depart and a form of totalitarianism will come in. The claim often made by a Christian leader is that the omission of Christ from the social process made results as futile as seeking fruit from an uprooted tree.

On the other hand, it must not be inferred that the worth and value of the various agencies working with the problems of society are discounted. In reality they are Christ's disciples, commissioned by him to meet human needs. But they are not ends in themselves. Separated from Christ they are only partial saviours, powerless to reach down into the depths of life and deal with the problems at their source. Religious and social systems may have exalted precepts and noble ambitions, but detached from the source of power they are ineffective.

Our task as religious workers is to discover not only the *truth* but the *dynamics* which transmit the truth into life making it effectual and potent. In order to accomplish this Paul directs us to the Christ.

At present the considered need of our age is not for more knowledge and greater skill but for creative energy. We possess the intellectual and scientific technics, yet lack the ability to effect lasting reforms and to build for permanent peace. Often religious leaders who are expected to be specialists in human and social dynamics complacently follow conventional routines without making any perceptible progress toward these goals.

Students of world cultures know that there is power in a great emotional urge. With it the thought life and habits of a people may be changed in the short period of one generation. The late Benjamin Kidd, social scientist, once said that "when an idea has become so visualized, so vivid, and so widespread in the minds of men that it touches the imagination, the swift transition to a new order of civilization is possible overnight."

This is indicative of the quests now being pursued in many quarters to find a dynamic. These outside movements may be considered a reflection upon the church, once recognized as the main source of creative spiritual energy. The church, however, may reaffirm without hesitation that the power needed stands in the last analysis in the category of spiritual forces. The Gospel, of which it need not be ashamed, possesses this dynamic element. Paul believed that in Christ God had done what was necessary to make possible the redemption both of man and society.

THE NEED FOR SAINTS

The understanding of the source of spiritual power, Paul continued, was not enough. As a second principle he held that it must have conductors through which it reaches persons. The redemptive power must be consciously fostered and spread. Generally these conductors are individuals who, through personal experience, have discovered the dynamic and who have dedicated themselves to the service of God.

Paul's use, therefore, of the word "saint" is not accidental. Every disciple, to be an instrument in building a new world order, is called to *be* as well as to *do*. Attainment of Christian character is as vital to the Christian life as achievement, and it is first. The great work effected by a Paul, an Augustine, a Luther, and a Wesley in saving others or in redeeming society has only been commensurate with their personal dedication and consecration. They were called *to be* saints before they were called *to make* saints, and their mighty influence was the result of their renewed minds and transformed natures. The first call then of God to his workers is to personal moral and spiritual development. Too often we forget this.

To an eager young reformer Count Tolstoy once said, "Young man, you sweat too much blood for the world; sweat some for yourself first. If you want to make the world better you have to be the best you can . . . You cannot bring the Kingdom of God into this world until you bring it into your own heart first."

This truth likewise was discerned by Gandhi who held that lasting social reform was dependent upon the character of the reformer. When asked by Dr. E. Stanley Jones how Christianity could be made to uplift India, he responded, "I would suggest that all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live more like Jesus Christ." Placing heavy emphasis upon personal saintliness, *being* does not necessarily mean the encouragement of detached European pietism. On the other hand it aims to keep the place of personal responsibility in religion and to counteract an attitude that "promotes God upstairs to an honorary job with no authority."

Every significant world movement which has risen to power has used the technique followed by the early church for redemptive purposes. In fact, Paul did not found the Christian movement but became its great interpreter. Jesus himself placed the dynamic element in it, selected a few potential leaders, convinced them of his cause and made them harbingers of a new day. The church as we know it largely has ceased to exert the power latent in its own appeal because it no longer exacts for membership any period of trial or testing. The practice of training converts to become devout followers of Christ and propagators of the faith largely is limited to the small sects.

Our time, while depressing, is like Nero's. It is plastic and ready to be quickly molded. It will soon be set in the direction of Christian idealism or some other ideology. The hour is a sobering one and calls for vision, courage, and consecration. We have observed in our generation the potency of a destructive ideal to lift a people out of themselves into a mass movement calling for sacrifice and service. The Christian church, with its cosmic view transcending all nationalities and racial barriers possesses an invincible concept.

Paraphrasing Arnold Toynbee we may say that "The divine spark of creative power is still alive in the Christian church and if we have the grace to kindle it into a flame then the stars in their courses cannot defeat our efforts to attain the goal of human endeavor."

The Beyonds of God

By C. LAWRENCE BROWN

Pastor, Morrisania Presbyterian Church, New York

REGARDLESS of race, religion or education, most people believe in a Great Beyond; but physical death is the only way to enter it. God has other Beyonds which we may know in this world and with this body.

There is a *vision beyond our traveling.* No place now is far away, but most people who travel see only marble, stone, or color. How many people can see a good world coming? Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes and look . . ." The vision of a redeemed world is truly beyond our traveling, but it is within our believing.

There is a *rest beyond our prescribing.* The doctors prescribe rest as the best and only cure for several serious illnesses. But vacations and other forms of physical rest cannot help us until there is peace within us. "Come unto me," said Jesus, "and I will give you rest." When we rest in God, we truly rest.

There is *food beyond our earning.* The most dissatisfied people are those who seem to have everything. They do not lack food, and yet their hunger is evident. Jesus offers us the bread of heaven. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that believeth in me shall never thirst."

Often it is only in man's necessity that God has the opportunity to reveal to us that vision, rest, and food which are beyond our attaining. For us and for all men, Jesus is the way to God's beyonds.

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Chance or Providence

By JOHNSTONE G. PATRICK

"So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."—Genesis 45:8.

A WHISP of straw battered and blown by the wind; a scrap of wood tossed and driven by any chance wave or current; and the life of man, the sport of some blind force! Is that your view? Not a heartening thought, but nonetheless, it is the working faith—or doubt—of a great many in this crazy gambling age! "Life," they say, "is a lottery; birth, an accident; marriage, a gamble; and immortality, a leap into the oncoming darkness." In other words, they believe that we are dogged and dominated, from the cradle to the grave, by mere chance. This is the creed of a great many, but, happily, not all; for there are a few folk who believe with every fibre of their being that they have been created, nurtured and nourished by an all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful Father, whose divine providence plans their pathway and guides them through the labyrinths of life. This guidance, to be sure, is not coercive.

One of the sad symptoms of the spiritual desolation of this tragic age in which we live has been the almost total eclipse of the great Christian doctrine of God's guiding hand. If words are windows that open onto the soul, then the loss of this word 'Providence' from our private and public speech tells its own sorry tale of tragedy.

FRAGMENTS HAVE A PATTERN

Life is bewildering because it is fragmentary. We are only able to read one volume of a story that extends to many volumes. We see only one act of a drama the scheme of which requires many acts to unfold its plot and purpose. We are like workers at some large piece of tapestry with our attention fixed on one part, and that a small part of the whole intricate pattern. We are like mechanics who see only one section of the great engine or subtle piece of mechanism at which they are toiling, and never see the completed machine. In a word, we know life only in part and consequently "prophesy in part."

It is because this is the condition of life that we are glad and grateful for a complete human story, an entire and coherent piece of human experience such as the old-world story of Joseph.

From the beginning to the end the story of this patriarch's life is a consistent and gradually developed record. Each incident in his eventful life helps the final crisis. I am not going through it in detail. Joseph himself sums up the moral and meaning of the history—"his-story"—in the memorable words:

> "God sent me before you to preserve a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God. . . ."

The story, taking all its parts into consideration, teaches us the utter futility of flouting God's plans. We see this over and over again. The brothers send Joseph into Egypt to avoid his domination, but thereby help him to attain a sway over them of which they, in their wildest and woolliest thoughts, never dreamed.

Saul would not have David to be king after him, so he chased him into the wilderness where he gathered 'round him men who formed the fulcrum of his future power. The scribes and pharisees crucified our Lord, buried him, and securely sealed his sepulchre, yet on the firm foundation of his death and resurrection the whole superstructure of our holy faith is built. This is always the result of fighting against God; there never can be any other, for the last word is with God.

I have always thought that from complete stories like that of Joseph we may safely infer that, as we are permitted to see any part of God's finished work, we recognize his love, his power, and his justice. One reason why we have difficulties in life is that we see only scraps and portions, "broken lights." If the glittering fragments of a mirror were still an unbroken surface it would reflect the King in all his beauty. We have only fragments with which to form a judgment. Yet we persist in judging the whole story of life by a couple of chapters. There is but One who knows the whole, and with him "a thousand years are as one day."

Take this thought to heart: Let the mysterious wisdom that guided the progress of events in the story of Joseph help us to understand the wisdom which guides all events, and seeks to develop all characters in the lives around us, and constrain all to fulfil purposes of love, justice, and wisdom. We cannot understand *sometimes,* but we can trust *always* a kindly providence.

In these days when so many of our fellows speak of chance—good luck and bad luck—it is well for us to remember each day what we often sing in church on Sundays:

> God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants His footsteps in the sea
> And rides upon the storm.
>
> Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
> But trust Him for His grace;
> Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face.
>
> His purposes will ripen fast,
> Unfolding every hour;
> The bud may have a bitter taste,
> But sweet will be the flower.

CHANCE IS UNREAL

In his Mountain Manifesto our Lord laid it down in unmistakable language that God is our Father. For this good reason, then, we should never be anxious or unduly flustered. Even the life of the grass and the fall of a sparrow are not outside the scope of the Father's care and providence. As for ourselves, the very hairs of our heads "are all numbered." Such is the Father's care and love for his children.

Two very disappointed and crestfallen men were one day in grave peril of losing faith in divine providence. God seemed to have been frustrated; and God's Son had perished. In the midst of their bewilderment, the Risen Redeemer drew near to them. You know the rest of the story. It is one of the most beautiful, hopeful, and heartening records in the Bible. It demonstrates God's sympathy and over-ruling providence. The encounter that day on the road to Emmaus was no mere chance occurrence, but the fore-ordained meeting-point in the return journey; and what a difference it made to two distressed and disappointed disciples! "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way."

In view of all this, it may sound a little strange that in one of our Lord's best known and most loved parables he should say: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves . . . who left him half dead. And *by chance* there came down a certain priest that way. . ." "By chance!" But that need not disturb us. The original Greek word employed does not really connote fortuity or chance in our modern sense. Literally, it means simply the meeting of two paths or events at one and the same point. The most exact English equivalent for the Greek word we could use would be "concurrence."

Saint Paul uses the verb "to chance" in the resurrection chapter of I Corinthians xv: "It may chance of wheat or some other grain"; but clearly his statement does not suggest uncertainty, for Paul and the modern scientist would agree that the seed is governed by a natural law. It certainly is not left to luck. But here we are on different ground, for while the seed is governed by a natural law, man has an added factor with which we must reckon; that is *freewill.*

PROVIDENCE LIMITED BY US

How can we reconcile and harmonize the fact of an over-ruling providence if man is perfectly free to act for himself? The answer is not very far to seek. God never coerces us or thrusts his gifts upon us. We must seek them and accept them. If we choose to turn our backs on him, shun his claims and wound his loving heart, what right have we to expect and to look for his providence?

When Saint Paul, writing from a wonderful experience, said, "We know that all things work together for good," he was careful—and guarded enough—to add, "to them that love God." Of this much, then, we can be assured: to the Christians there is no such thing as luck or chance.

A man who is reconciled to God and at peace with

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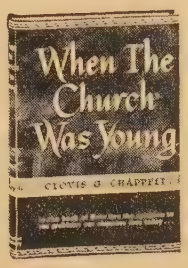

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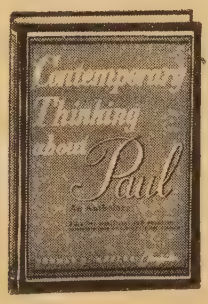

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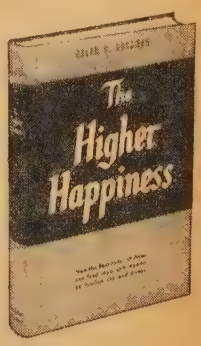

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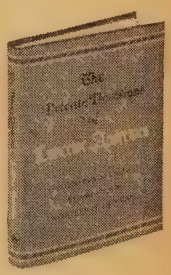

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him need fear nothing in this life or in the life-to-come. "I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me." "He telleth the number of the stars; He healeth the broken heart and bindeth up their wounds." It may seem incredible. One may even try to heap up arguments against its probability. But countless Christians in every age and clime have found that it is gloriously true.

DIVINE HELP IS CONSTANT

The issues of life and death, which seem to us to be dark and inscrutable, tangled and confused, are, for God, clearcut. God foresees, and makes provision. For those who trust in him, and who strive with full intent to make their wills subservient to his will, nothing in life or death ever happens by chance. In Jesus the temple veil is rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and as we look, lo, we see the end of a titanic tussle issuing in victory.

Illustrations abound in Whittier's poems of divine help stealing into sad and broken lives, and a new life springing up from the inspiration that

> "Deep below, as high above
> Sweeps the circle of God's love."

Every season of the year brought with it some charm to the gentle Quaker poet. He enjoyed the song of the birds and the song of the sea, and sang his own sweet songs as his thought rose to the Creator of all beauty, and the gracious God of all love. The season that to many is regarded as a sad one, when autumn ushers in the deep sleep of winter, was to Whittier one of special glory with its tinted leaves, its riotous galaxy of color: scarlet maples, russet beeches, yellow hickories, golden walnuts and graceful silver birches. Autumn tossed to him its hints and intimations of a providence, divine and kindly:

"And I will trust that He who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads
And stains those mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine;
Grant what we ask aright; from wrong debar,
And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter every star."

The unknown vastly exceeds the known. Brilliant though our recent progress in the advancement of learning has been, human knowledge is still but a tiny beam in darkness. In the following directions, a handful chosen at random, the knowledge even of our experts is insufficient to guarantee control: cancer, infantile paralysis, the weather, how to tap the presumably inexhaustible supplies of heat and power in the heart of the earth, the satisfactory treatment of social misfits, the determination of sex, the arrest of age and death, the meaning of genius and the subtleties of sin. This inventory of human nescience could be indefinitely extended. We can't bribe the sea to surrender all her secrets, we can't reverse gravitation, we can't abolish disease, we can't redeem sin, we can't oulaw war, and we can't dodge death.

In a word, despite all our pomp and circumstance, we are but creatures, and puny, frail creatures at that; creatures very precariously surviving amidst the wholly indifferent play of forces far too subtle to be known and far too massive to be controlled. We don't even know whence we came, or for certain whither and when we go, or what we are. We are still, by comparison, like little children crying in the night. However, we are moving steadily towards a more chivalrous and Christian attitude.

It is not given to us to trace every movement of the hand of God in human history and experience—"we see through a glass, darkly"—but we can, like Joseph and Jesus, trust a kindly providence. Moreover, we can yield ourselves to a Love that will never let us go, to a Light that will follow us all our way, to a Joy that will seek us out through pain, to a Cross that will keep lifting up our heads.

1-15-50

A Pastoral Prayer

By ROY C. HELFENSTEIN

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, we thank Thee for that faith which enables us to realize that all the good in life comes from Thee and that nothing but good can rightly be attributed to Thee. We thank Thee for Thy love which never fails, and which is our support in the darkest hours of life.

As we walk the pathway of the new year, may we walk hand in hand with Thee. Increase our love for Thee. Strengthen our confidence in Thee. Make Thyself as real to us as are the members of our homes. Grant that the new year may witness in our lives a stronger loyalty to Thy church, a deeper concern for spiritual goodness, and a broader sympathy for the baffled and misguided people of our world.

We thank Thee that with Thee there is comfort for the sorrowing ones, strength for those who walk falteringly the way of faith, support for those whose burdens are almost more than they can bear, forgiveness for those who have transgressed thy holy law, and peace of conscience for all who sincerely seek to do thy righteous will.

Help us to walk the pathway of the new year with buoyant faith and the inspiration of unflinching confidence. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The New Year

A Flower unblown: a Book unread:
A Tree with fruit unharvested:
A Path untrod: a House whose rooms
Lack yet the heart's divine perfumes:
This is the Year that for you waits
Beyond Tomorrow's mystic gates.

—Horatio Nelson Powers

The Littlest Lion

A Sermon for Children by T. Moore Atkinson

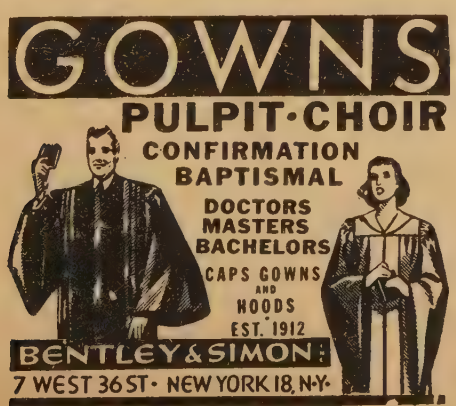
DID you ever fondle a lion cub, a tiny one? Some time ago we went to a small city park where they had a number of animals in cages. There we found a tiny lion cub we could take in our arms and fondle just like a kitten. The cub was only a few days old and perfectly friendly. When the keeper put the cub into a cage there was a little pup dog there to keep him company, and the two played all day long just as two puppies play together. They were fast friends and neither did the other any harm. Cute, that littlest lion!

But we learned from the keeper that little lions do not stay little. And that gentle cubs, somehow, do not stay gentle when they begin to grow up. Teeth enlarge and grow very sharp. Claws grow long and powerful and muscles grow strong enough to crunch and tear. One has to watch out, then, when he goes near. This littlest lion, the keeper told us, had a brother cub nearly a year older. And he said he never dared to fondle that one any more. They kept this young lion behind strong bars, and were wary and cautious when they went into the cage. It was dangerous and treacherous. And the cute little lion we could hold in our arms, it too would soon be like that—dangerous.

Now that littlest lion is just like any evil habit we may allow ourselves. Did you ever fondle a little evil habit? A cute one? Watch out!

Any old habit begins just like that lion cub. It may seem very cute and playful. And we can take it into our hearts and hug it to ourselves. It seems funny, like a kitten is funny. And awfully interesting. But watch out! It will grow up. And when it grows up it will become dangerous just as a lion is dangerous. Yes, and treacherous; it will deceive you some day and jump on you when you are not looking. A little evil habit becomes a giant, evil habit quickly.

A poet has said that the sin seemed so very, very little, and the day so big, that he thought the hours would swallow it up and the wind blow the sin away. But the wind died down, and the day passed swiftly, and the little sin that seemed so very small grew up; grew up into a hungry giant. Yes, a hungry lion. Many people have found it like that.



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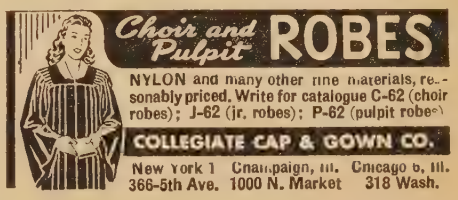
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A trainer can go into the cage of a grown lion fairly safely if he has some weapon, and if he always keeps his eye on the lion. As soon as he turns his back, however, or becomes incautious, that lion may jump on him and tear and mangle him to death. But who really wants to go through all his life always having to keep his eye on those evil habits that are likely to pounce on him as soon as his back is turned! It really isn't worth it. No bad habit is. If constantly you have to keep an eye on your habits so they do not pounce on you, you cannot do much else. And there are so many wonderful things to do all the time!

When a lion jumps you and mangles you, you won't be worth very much as a man or woman afterward. And it's very much like that when an evil habit jumps your character. You may look wonderful on the outside. But inside, well YOU will know that your heart and soul are not whole any more.

Jesus once put it in a little different way. He said, "Everybody who commits sin is a slave of sin." But he was meaning very much the same thing as we are saying here. That evil—if you allow it grow upon you, and if you fondle and hug it—will conquer you and either make you a slave, or kill you. It's better, don't you think, not to fondle and hug those evil habits that now seem so cute and small and funny! Let the littlest lion go, and the great giant lion—habit—will not pounce upon you later on.

CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH CALENDAR 1950

* Common to both Catholic and Protestant.
CAPITALIZED—Jewish Holidays.
Other dates primarily Protestant.

*	Jan.	1	Circumcision of Christ
*		6	Epiphany
*		8	First Sunday After Epiphany
*		15	Second Sunday After Epiphany
*		22	Third Sunday After Epiphany
		25	Conversion of St. Paul
*		29	Fourth Sunday After Epiphany
	Feb.	2	The Presentation of Christ
		2	HAMISHAH ASAR BESHEBAT
*		5	Septuagesima Sunday
*		12	Sexagesima Sunday
		14	SHABBAT SHEKALIN
*		19	Quinquagesima Sunday
*		22	Ash Wednesday
*		26	First Sunday in Lent
		28	SHABBAT ZAKOR
	Mar.	2	FAST OF ESTHER
		3	PURIM
		4	SHUSHAN PURIM
*		4	Second Sunday in Lent
		7	SHABBATH PARAH
*		12	Third Sunday in Lent
*		19	Fourth Sunday in Lent
*		26	Passion Sunday
*		25	The Annunciation
*	Apr.	2	Palm Sunday
		2	PASSOVER (to April 9, 1950)
*		6	Maundy Thursday
*		7	Good Friday
		8	Easter Eve
*		9	Easter Sunday
		10	Easter Monday
		11	Easter Tuesday
*		16	First Sunday After Easter
*		23	Second Sunday After Easter
*		25	St. Mark
*		30	Third Sunday After Easter
	May	1	St. Philip and St. James
*		7	Fourth Sunday After Easter
*		14	Fifth Sunday After Easter
		14	Rogation Day
*		18	Ascension Day
*		21	Sunday Within the Octave of the Ascension
		22-23—	SHAVOUT
*		28	Pentecost Sunday (Whitsunday)
		29	Monday in Whitsun-Week
		30	Tuesday in Whitsun-Week
*	June	4	Trinity Sunday (After Pentecost, June 4-November 12, the following twenty-four Sundays are observed by the Catholic Church and serve as a guide to its form of ritual).
		13	St. Barnabas
	June	11-November 5, 1950—First to twenty-second Sundays After Trinity are observed by the Protestant Church and are used as a guide in type of service of Protestant Episcopal and Lutheran Churches.	
	June	24	St. John the Baptist
		29	St. Peter
	July	2	SHIVAH ASAR BETAMMUZ
		23	TISHAH BEAB
		25	St. James
	Aug.	6	Transfiguration
		15	Assumption of Mary into Heaven (Catholic)
		24	St. Bartholomew
	Sep.	12-13	ROSH HASHONAH
		14	FAST OF GEDALIA
		17	SHABBAT SHUBAH
		21	YOM KIPPUR
		26	SUCCOTH (to 10/4/50)
		29	St. Michael and All Angels
	Oct.	2	HOSHANAN RABBAH
		3	SHEMINI AZERET
		4	SIMHATH TORAH
		18	St. Luke
		28	Feast of Christ the King (Catholic)
*	Nov.	1	All Saints' Day
*		2	All Souls' Day
*		26	Sunday Before Advent
		30	St. Andrew
*	Dec.	2	First Sunday in Advent
		4-12—	HANUKAH
		8	Immaculate Conception (Catholic)
*		10	Second Day in Advent
*		17	Third Sunday in Advent
		19	ASARAH BETEBETH
*		24	Fourth Sunday in Advent
*		25	Christmas Day
		26	St. Stephen
		27	St. John the Evangelist
		28	Holy Innocents

(Prepared by Dr. Maeanna Cheserton-Mangle of The Religious Press Committee in New York)

The February issue of The Pulpit will carry a description of the Jewish Festivals and Holy Days.

Unpublished Sermons

Stretch Forth Your Hand

FRANCIS C. WHEATON of the First Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, bases a sermon on a healing incident that took place in a Synagogue in Capernaum, recorded in Matthew 12:1-3. As Jesus was teaching in this synagogue he observed a man whose hand was withered. The gospel of Luke gives us a doctor's observation that it was the man's right hand. Tradition has it that this unfortunate man was a stone-mason by trade. Notice how several significant circumstances worked together in a wonderful and satisfying experience that meant health and salvation to this poor man.

First, he was in church when he found new hope and opportunity. Every church spire, pointing upward, proclaims the truth that God loves and cares for us. The man with the paralyzed hand believed something like that for he went to worship God in his church.

Second, in church the man found the one person who could meet his need. Had he not gone to church that Sabbath he might have missed seeing Jesus and never been healed. The Japanese have learned how to raise dwarfed trees twelve to eighteen inchs tall. They cut the tap root, then the tree has to find what nourishment it can from the surface roots. If our contact with Jesus Christ, the tap-root of faith, is severed, how can we expect to become the fine noble characters God wants us to become.

Third, Jesus asked this man to stretch forth his hand, something specific and personal. But it was something difficult to do for the man's hand was paralyzed. It was a challenge to his faith. Suppose this man had said, "I can't do that," or "I have never been asked to do this before."

Fourth, Because of his willing obedience to Christ's command, and his faith in Christ's power to help him, blessed results followed. People say that the age of miracles is past; yet thousands rise up to testify that Christ will give power to any man who will surrender his abilities and talents to the kingdom of God. Every person who has taken a task to do in the church, who has stretched forth his hand to do what he can, has found the deepest secret of the Christian life: an unfailing supply of power.

What is Sacred?

A GOOD INDEX to the character of any religion is found in the answer to the guestion, what does it hold sacred? So states Thomas A. Goodwin, pastor of the First Church of Christ in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in a sermon based on I Cor. 3:16, 17. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God. . ." In primitive religions, explains Mr. Goodwin, we find that there are sacred stones, sacred trees, sacred pools, and sacred images. It is some material object which is sacred. There is no religion that has ever been free from this idea that certain objects are so sacred that anyone who would violate that sanctity would be severely punished by the deity, perhaps by instant death. There is a story in the Old Testament that illustrates this.

The prophets were the first to understand and proclaim that God is not primarily interested in the inviolability of sacred objects. Jeremiah stood in the courtyard of the temple and declared that unless Judah reformed, Jehovah would permit their enemies to defeat them and lay waste their city and their temple. They had supposed that Jehovah was so interested in preserving the temple in which he was worshiped that no foreign army would be able to capture Jerusalem. Centuries later, after the temple had been destroyed and rebuilt, the idea of its inviolability persisted, so that the Jews made one of their chief accusations against Jesus the fact that he had predicted that the temple would again be destroyed.

In the development of Judaism this early emphasis upon the sacredness of material objects was somewhat displaced by a higher idea of holiness. Even more sacred than the temple had become the law. This was a real advance. The Ten Commandments are much more worthy of reverence than the Ark. But as every sacred thing becomes enshrined in some elaborate and appropriate setting, so the elementary laws of God became almost obscured among a mass of scribal interpretations. It was against the worship of the law as supremely sacred that Jesus preached. The law indeed is to be revered, but there are higher values. When, therefore, the Jews accused Jesus of breaking the laws about Sabbath observance, he replied that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Human values are above legal values. This was a great advance, beyond which it is inconceivable that we shall ever pass.

Many are the offenses against the sacred today. First there is that group of offenses against the *temple* of the spirit. We do not reverence this temple when we stuff it with rich food and allow it to grow weak through lack of exercise. And what shall we say of the man who fills his body with alcoholic poison? Also there is war which violates the temple with horrible impunity. Even in time of peace, property is often esteemed of more value than human personality. Numerous reforms beneficial to humanity are met with stubborn resistance from those whose primary interest is the size of the dividend.

Another group of offenses against the sacred are those which mistake the symbol for the reality. It is possible to worship the temple, instead of the deity to which the temple is sacred. There is a very large cult of people who worship their bodies. We hold public contests and award expensive prizes, not for the most perfect personalities, but for the most beautiful bodies. Even in the home we are not free from the danger of mistaking the symbol for the reality. Whenever a man and a woman imagine that a luxurious house is equivalent to a home, they have confused the symbol with the reality.

The church, too, is continually under the necessity of examining its standard of values to see what is being treated as the most sacred. Does a church pay more attention to ritual and ceremony, vestments and altar pieces, than it does to worship offered in sincerity and truth? Does it regard big budgets and expensive edifices as proof of spiritual vitality? Does it ask of its members a superstitious awe in the presence of ecclesiastical authority or tradition, or does it demand of its members ethical living as proof of loyalty? What is the most sacred value in our religious life?

The supremely sacred is spirit, the spirit of God, a portion of which dwells in each child of God. The sacrament of life is the use of all material possessions in the service of that spirit.

The cry is out: Let men stand up and be counted. Are they honest, patriotic Americans or are they ashamed of the country, wanting to substitute some form of foreign government? It looks easy, temptingly easy. But let's make very certain that there is room in that first group of honest patriotic Americans both for the man who counts America perfect and will die to protect the *status quo* and also for the man who loves America enough to want her strengthened and improved, who wants to push on to fuller realizations of democracy. The great patriot of today and tomorrow is the man who loves America enough to want to see her finer than she is.—*Kenneth Irving Brown.*

What Makes a Good Sermon?

Series I

● ***Joseph Fort Newton***

A SERMON is a work of art, as much so as a sonnet or an epic; only different. It must have an object as well as a subject, else it misses aim

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

—a truth to teach, a problem of life to solve, an appeal to accept and serve Christ. It must convince the mind, warm the heart, and move the will. If it fails in either respect it is imperfect.

In a sermon the mind is convinced by insight more than by argument, by discernment more than by debate. Occasionally a sermon may be a solo-forum, discussing a truth or a problem pro and con—but not too often. A preacher is a persuader, and to persuade others he must himself be utterly persuaded of the Gospel in his own heart, if he is to win others to it.

Emerson heard a sermon and it left him unmoved. He could not tell whether the preacher had ever been tempted, had ever sinned, had ever looked into an open grave. It may have been theologically correct, but it was spiritually, humanly nil. A sermon is not an essay stewed in cream; it is something warm and winsome from the heart of the preacher breathed into the soul of his hearer.

Lord, teach us how to pray, how to preach, how to know the truth as truth is in Jesus, how to tell it so simply that a child will understand, and a wandering, wounded human soul cannot forget it.

● ***Marshall Wingfield***

GOOD to whom? For whom? For what? Geography may hold part of the answer. Social and cultural stratifications may have something to say. A good sermon in Boston might not be called good in rural Tennessee.

Yet dwellers in city and country have much in common. Both need instruction and inspiration. Both want honesty and simplicity. A good sermon will not say of one who slipped on the ice, that his perpendicularity suddenly became a horizontality. It will simply say he fell. Shakespeare was too wise to make Mark Antony say, "I have neither intellectual acumen, nor extensive vocabulary, nor ethical significance." He made him say, "I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth." And he made him say, "poor dumb mouths" instead of "pitiable, inarticulate orifices."

A good sermon cannot be made out of sanctimonious whining, bombastic bull-roaring and declamatory tricks. If the preacher is seeking for good style, let him remember that good style is the style which is not noticed. The difference between the good and the poor sermon may be a matter of restraint. "Mediocrity," said Delsarte, "is not the too little, but the too much." The good sermon will be temperate in adjectives, illustrations, gestures and, above all these, in points. Too many points make a sermon pointless. Misuse of the pause may mutilate instead of punctuate.

A good sermon finds people where they live, and helps them to move on to better living, by feeding the mind, warming the heart, stimulating the imagination, kindling high resolutions, strengthening the will, and reassuring the soul. A Chinese proverb says, "To talk much without an aim is like climbing a tree to catch a fish."

A good sermon comes from the preacher to whom preaching is not a chore. It is the result of having something to say, rather than of having to say something. It is grown, not manufactured. As the bee takes sweet water from flowers and makes honey by adding something from itself, so the minister makes a sermon by adding himself to what he gathers from books. A critic said of a great preacher, "His theology, by itself, is not very attractive." To which a friend replied, "It is never *by itself*." Milton said if a man would write a poem he must first be one. So it is in preaching a good sermon.

A good sermon is so instinct with ethical and social insight that it sends a clean wind blowing through the heart, reviving old dreams and kindling new ones. It will tie the timely to the timeless, but time itself will not be part of the yard-stick by which "good" is ascertained. No man can say how

MARSHALL WINGFIELD

long a sermon ought to be. If a sermon seems long, it *is* long whether it has been going ten minutes or an hour.

A good sermon is quite likely to be rooted and grounded in the word of God as contained in our Bible. In a 39-year ministry, I have heard most of the noted preachers of the period, on both sides of the Atlantic, and I have tried to learn from all of them, but I never really learned to preach until I came back to the book which I had too-long neglected, and there, at that listening-post of the soul, tarried long with those great passages wherein are such "flame and tears and singing, as melt the heart with pity."

● ***Clarence Edward Macartney***

AS THE YEARS go by in his ministry, the true preacher thinks less and less of what is called "a good sermon," and more and more about a sermon which will "do good." In that sense, then, a good sermon is:

I. A SERMON WHICH HAS ORDER AND A NATURAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT. God is not "the Author of confusion," and a preacher ought not to be the author of confusion. A good sermon ought to have its natural divisions and growth like a gracious tree—roots, trunk, branches, and leaves.

II. A SERMON WHICH IS ILLUMINATED WITH IMAGI-

NATION. This does not necessarily mean formal, or anecdotal illustrations, though these are often effective,

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY

but words and sentences which have windows in them. Henry Ward Beecher rarely used a story or extended illustration. But his sentences abound in metaphors and similes which paint a picture and let in light.

III. A SERMON WHICH IS WRITTEN AND SPOKEN BY THE PREACHER AS "ONE HAVING AUTHORITY," not the preacher's authority, but the authority of the scriptures. Rome speaks with the authority of the church. Protestantism has a far higher authority, the authority of the Bible. The tragedy of present-day preaching is that while Rome stands loyal to its authority of the church, great numbers of Protestant preachers have abandoned the authority of the scriptures. They have no "Thus saith the Lord" in their message but speak only out of their brief experience, their little wisdom, and their dim vision.

IV. A SERMON WHICH EXALTS JESUS CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD AND THE ONLY SAVIOUR OF MEN BY HIS ATONING DEATH ON THE CROSS FOR SINNERS. What would St. Peter and St. Paul think if they came into some of the Protestant Churches today and heard sermons in which there was no presentation and no exaltation of Jesus Christ, sometimes no mention of his name. It is recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles, that Philip "went down unto Samaria and preached Christ unto them; and there was great joy in that city." He preached a "good sermon" in Samaria because it did good to the souls of the people.

V. A SERMON WHICH IS WRITTEN AND DELIVERED WITH A WARM HEART AND WITH A LOVE FOR MEN. Last summer, in the old Presbyterian Church of Newburyport, Massachusetts, I stood under the pulpit by the dust of that mighty Boanerges, George Whitefield, who, by his constant preaching of Christ's sermon, "Ye must be born again," brought thousands into the Kingdom of God. Standing there I thought of that prayer which was so often upon the lips of Whitefield as he neared the end of his ministry, the prayer which I try not to forget when I go into the pulpit, "O Lord, give me a warm heart."

● *Gerald Kennedy*

THIS is the kind of question one feels certain he can answer until he tries to write it down. Then there comes the realization that many elements go into the making of a good sermon, but it is not so easy to define what is essential.

Bad sermons leave us with a sense of questions having been answered that we were not asking. Irrelevancy is the supreme preaching crime. A listener leaves such an experience with bitterness in his heart, for he has been betrayed and condemned to a deeper

GERALD KENNEDY

frustration and a blacker despair. He has hoped and he has been denied, which makes his condition worse than it was before.

A good sermon makes a man believe that God in Christ has provided the solution for his dilemma. This is not to say that every man who listens to a sermon is caught in an immediate disaster. But every man is entangled always in issues too big and too complex for his resources. The Gospel comes with the promise of God's concern and God's succor. Preaching ought to bring that mighty truth home to every heart. Let a man leave the service feeling that there is an answer, and he has been listening to real preaching.

The danger in this idea lies in the temptation to promise easy answers. This may catch the unsophisticated and do great harm. Yet I would risk this possibility rather than encourage the sort of preaching which falls on the ear with such dullness as to kill expectancy.

I went to hear a well-known preacher whose reputation rests on his ability to speak comfortably to the well-to-do. He is known as one who equates the presence of God with the world's definition of success. I went with a prejudice against him, and more to see his technique than to be spiritually revived. Now here is a strange thing. In spite of a very critical attitude, I was helped. The sermon was filled with confidence, and he made me believe that what Jesus Christ did for men in the First Century, he would do for me. When I thought of all the lifeless preaching which does not matter, it seemed to me that if a sermon is able to convince a man that, when he decides for Christ he shall have power, it is a good sermon.

A Canadian churchman was disappointed with some of the depressing messages at Amsterdam, but he spoke in glowing terms of Bishop Berggrav of Norway. His message, this layman thought, contained three ringing affirmations: "There is a foe. There is a fight. There is a victory!" And that, I believe, is at the heart of all good preaching.

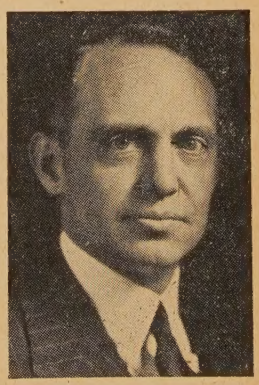
● *Hampton Adams*

IT IS ASSUMED that the editors of The Pulpit, asking this question, had in mind the sermon that is preached in the average pulpit on a normal Sunday. Although a sermon that would be good in one situation would not be good under other circumstances, there are some things that are essential to all sermons.

The preacher must be sincere. No skill in the preparation of the sermon and no art in preaching can compensate for the insincerity of the preacher.

The sermon, to be good, must proclaim pointedly a portion of the Gospel of Christ and give evidence of a comprehension of the whole Gospel on the part of the preacher.

Specific spiritual needs of the people which have become a concern of the



HAMPTON ADAMS

preacher should determine the subject of the sermon. For this reason the faithful pastor usually is the most

effective preacher. His sermons meet living needs.

The good sermon is not produced easily. Do laymen ever know the awful responsibility of speaking the Word of God that weighs on the preacher? How much worse if the minister himself does not feel that responsibility! Self-examination in the light of the Spirit of Christ, confession of sin and humble, grateful acceptance of the grace of God are essential to the preparation of the preacher.

The preparation of the sermon requires earnest study. Years of experience do not lessen the need for this study; rather do they reveal its necessity. When, after study, the sermon is ready to be written and delivered, the arts of writing and public speaking are used to make the message clear and persuasive. The purpose of the sermon is to cause persons to think and behave as children of God. To do this, many of them must be brought to repentance. All of them, hearing the Word, need to *do* it in order to build their houses on the rock. Every sermon, therefore, must call for decision.

The mood of those who hear, in its bearing on the sermon, is second only to the preparation which the preacher has made. The best sermon partakes of the vitality, direction, and total spirit of the church's worship.

Every sermon should be able to stand alone as a true, although only partial, presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the occasional sermon lacks the fullness which inheres in pastoral preaching where both preacher and congregation can make assumptions on the bases of previous sermons and await further messages for the answers to some questions.

Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of the Pulpit

A Little Child Shall Lead

THOUGH Australia bars from its territory all persons of the so-called yellow race, Japanese school children have been permitted to send messages to "pen friends" in Australian schools. One of these letters published by *World's Children* was written by a thirteen-year-old Japanese girl from the Shinagawa Girls' High School. The writer fails to say that she lost her right hand from an incendiary bomb:

TO SOME SCHOOLGIRL IN AUSTRALIA:

I am afraid you may not like receiving this letter or answering it because I am Japanese. But I hope it is not so.

I am not your enemy. It may help a little if I tell you that I too have suffered—my three brothers, they are all asleep; my house, it is burnt.

Out of all this cruelty and hatred and mistake, could we not arrange that there be peace and prosperity and happiness for all countries? I want it that way.

Even to a war-scarred land like mine, spring will come. It is coming now, with plum-blossom and cherry and happiness and warmth. How do we arrange that it might be spring for all the world?

I would beg you to believe that I write this letter not with my pen, but with my heart. Hidoke Inourie.—*James K. Allen; The Unitarian Church; Dighton, Mass.*

Brotherhood Inescapable

ONE of the finest points in Ernest Hemingway's book, For Whom the Bell Tolls, was in the poetic gem from which he took the title for his book. In the 17th Century, John Donne, a religious poet, told the story of a village where it was the custom to toll the bell when any of the natives died. Naturally the inhabitants came running to inquire *for whom the bell tolled*. The minister's reply is a poetic gem: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the mainland; . . . any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls: *it tolls for thee*." —*Claude Allen McKay; First Congregational Church; Binghamton, N. Y.*

Accept No Substitute

I MET a man who manufactured a patent cleaner. In all his advertising, and labeled all over the package of the product were to be found the words, "Accept no substitute." I asked him, "Don't you want people to buy anything but your cleaner?" "No," he replied, "not if they think it is like our cleaner. Our patents protect our formula and no other cleaner can be nearly as strong, so if they buy a substitute and are disappointed they will not even try our cleaner."—*Ensworth Reisner; First Methodist Church; Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

Letting the Master Have His Way

WE MUST have the courage to say, "Lord, I have made a mess of my life. Under my own management, I have led my life into a tangle out of which I cannot extricate myself. Here, Lord, I give myself to you and let you take over my life. Do with it as you please." Then he will be like the organist who reluctantly let a stranger play his organ. The stranger, an apparently insignificant man, walked to the console as the organist was practicing. He asked to play. The organist at first refused. But the man kept insisting. Finally the organist gave the stranger permission. In a short while, the cathedral was filled with perfect music so that even the organist was astounded. When the stranger was finished, he went to the man and asked: "Who are you that you can play like that?" Simply the man said, " I am Felix Mendelssohn," and walked away. The organist hit his brow and said, "Felix Mendelssohn, the master! Almost I did not let the master have his way." Jesus Christ is the master of life and he asks us to play upon the console of our lives. If we would let him have his way, he would bring out of our lives a wonderful melody, full of harmony and beauty.—*J. R. Brokhoff; Lutheran Church of the Redeemer; Atlanta, Ga.*

Bible Study Still Pays

IN OUR IMAGE edited by Harte is a book of Bible stories so selected and so illustrated as to provide a wide reading audience. When the book was first contemplated, Guy Rowe was commissioned to do the illustrations. Rowe, who was not a religious man in the usual sense, steeped himself in a rigorous Bible study. His characters were friends and people he met. He spent three and a half years on thirty-two illustrations. When his work was done he had discovered the meaning of faith and his outlook on life was new and vitally Christian. How did it happen? This is Guy Rowe's own testimony:—I don't know how to explain it in words. I had to elevate myself to the high places to catch the spirit of the prophets." (Story in Time Magazine, October 10, 1949)—*Willard J. Rand, Jr.; Methodist Church; Woodland, Calif.*

A Blot Becomes Beauty

THE STORY is told of John Ruskin calling on a literary collaborator and finding her in mental distress. She had owned a costly handkerchief that had been ruined by a blot of ink.

"Nothing can be done with it" she cried. "It's absolutely worthless!"

"Are you sure?" said Ruskin. "Let me have it awhile." A little later the handkerchief came back by mail and his friend could scarce recognize it. Ruskin with the skill of an artist had used the blot as a basis, and had made a design in India ink of surpassing beauty. It was now many times more valuable than in its original loveliness.

What we think are blots of life often can be the foundation stones, the decisive markers, toward worthy endeavor.—*Emil H. Bassler; St. Paul Evang. & Reformed Church; New Bremen, Ohio.*

Sand Can Become Stone

IN THE Peabody Museum in New Haven is an exhibit of a section of earth showing where lightning struck and fused the sand into a thin tube of glass some 15 or 20 feet long. One instant sand, the next glass; one instant shifting, unstable particulars of sand, the next order, the creation of something new, a testimony of a great changing power.

How often our lives are like the shifting sand, a profusion of activities signifying nothing. Unstable, a striving after good one minute, a grasp for security the next; no design, no consuming purpose, no living testimony to a great power working upon us.

Christ promised that this power could come to each person. He pleaded that order, happiness, stability, and eternal security could be ours. With a great compassion and love he leads us to believe that even our weak lives can be a living testimony to the unifying power of God.—*Alvin D. Johnson; First Baptist Church; Middletown, Conn.*

The Supreme Guide

THE STORY is told of a man traveling in a distant country. His journey led over high mountains and he sought a guide who could direct him. One man offered his services as a guide, and the traveler said, "Have you been to the village where I wish to go?" The man replied, "No, but I have been part of the way and I have heard others talk about the rest of the way." The traveler answered, "You will not do."

Another man came and offered his services as a guide. The traveler asked, "Have you been to the village where I wish to go?" The man replied, "No, but I have been to the top of the mountain and have looked at the village." The traveler said, "You will not do."

A third man came and offered to guide the traveler to his destination. He was asked the same question and answered, "Sir, the village to which you are going is my home." The traveler took this man as his guide. He wanted some one who had been the whole way.

When we look for someone to follow in our lives, we want one who has gone the whole way, one who has lived the fullest, the completest life. As a guide for life, Jesus is supreme. —*Herman G. McCoy; Memorial Presbyterian Church; Cherokee, Iowa.*

The Greatest Wastage

EXUPERY was one of those singing souls whose death brings home anew the tragedy of war. In his book, *Wind, Sand And Stars,* he philosophizes as he takes a plane off the field at Morocco and sees two of his native Frenchmen leaning against the wall apparently derelicts in the game of life. They have no purpose. Their life is meaningless. They seem to be leaning against the wall, but waiting for nothing in particular to happen. Exupery wonders for a moment how he escaped this oblivion of nothingness. In comparing himself with the two aimless individuals, he guesses that the difference is that nobody ever took them and shook them alive and started their feet out on the unending adventure of discovering a part of life's secrets, following the road of high adventure, trying to take the common stuff of life and fill it as full as possible with the glory of God.

In a later book, *Flight To Arras,* he carries the same thought further as he walks up and down the aisle of a train of refugees fleeing from Poland. Cities without are bombed and there is wreckage everywhere; yet the real loss of life to him is not that which is without but the fact that so many on the train have never been awakened to what life really is. He notes the mothers holding children. He wonders who will awaken within the children the sleeping Michael Angelos, the discoverer, the inventor, the dreamer of tomorrow, or will all of the children grow into that state where life just exists. He sums it up in the statement, "Great wastage of life is not in the bombed cities and wrecked villages but in wasted life that never knows why it was born."—*Frank A. Court; St. Paul Methodist Church; Lincoln, Nebr.*

Opposition Stimulates

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE illustrates the value of opposition to a cause one espouses in an article in the August '49 issue of the *Woman's Home Companion.* It seems that fishermen off the east coast of England have the problem of keeping their herring fresh and lively until they are able to get them to market. Dead herrings soon turn flabby and tasteless. For this reason fishermen began building tanks into their trawlers to keep their catch alive until they could bring them to port. But those tank-trapped herrings knew they were prisoners and were the worse for wear when they came to market. They always turned sluggish.

One captain discovered a trick for keeping his catch not just alive but lively and beautifully fresh. He whispered his secret to a friend of Mr. Toynbee one day. "It is really very simple," he said. "I put in my tank one catfish, and that catfish can be trusted to keep the herrings lively. To be sure, he will eat one or two of them on the way to port; but that is the catfish's wages. And he is worth his keep, for those herrings do come in fresh, and the price they fetch on the market pays for the catfish's toll on them fifty times over."

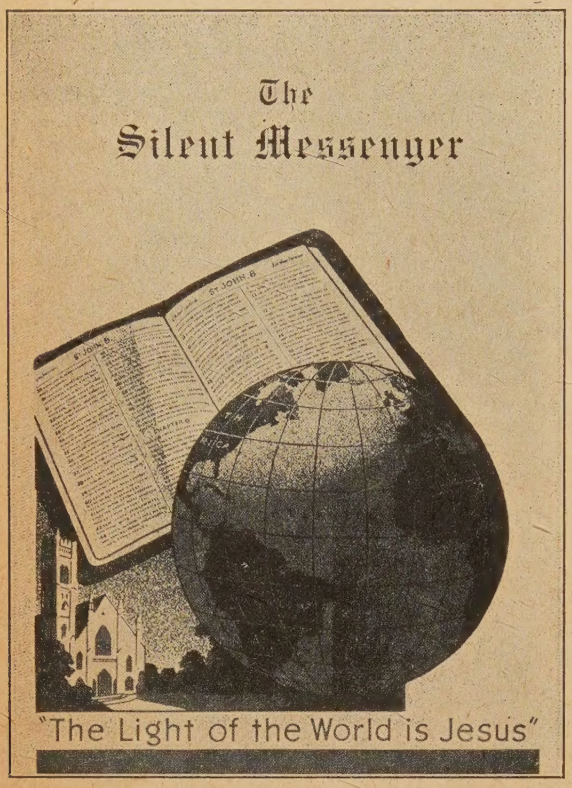
Mr. Toynbee suggests that in the herring tank which we call the western world, Russian Communism is the obliging catfish and Providence the resourceful captain. Opposition to any cause keeps the advocates of that cause "on their toes." The Christian Church is the better because there are those who oppose it. Let us thank God for opposition.—*M. F. Allen, Jr.; Salem Cumberland Presbyterian Church; Warrensburg, Mo.*

Deeds Not Words

WHEN a certain minister asked a young man which of his sermons it was that had led him to accept Christ and unite with the church, the young man answered: "I live on a street where every Sunday, regardless of the weather, I saw a man go past and turn in here to this church. It was not your sermons, sir, but that Christian, faithful to his religious commitment, that led me to follow Christ." —*Thomas Anderson; Central Congregational Church; Atlanta, Ga.*

A Heavy Responsibility

Two young parents reported recently a prayer by their five-year-old boy. They had just finished a playroom in their home. That evening their son prayed: "God, I thank you for the play-room where Daddy and Mommie can play with brother and me." The parents confessed that the incident made them feel their heavy responsibility to their children.—*Earl M. Frantz, director of public relations, McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas.*



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